



john Widdicombs co.



This Booklet is not a Catalog

The purpose of this booklet is to illustrate the scope and high level of John Widdicomb furniture design. It is not meant for use as a catalog. All that is expected from this booklet, is that it will suggest ways in which John Widdicomb furniture can be grouped to create beautiful interiors; and to encourage the love and appreciation of fine furniture.

No picture can convey the "feel" of a piece of furniture. Texture of lovely woods, color and depth of finish, perfect proportion and fine cabinetry, become tangible only in the actuality of the piece itself.

For these reasons, comprehensive displays of John Widdicomb furniture in suitable settings are maintained in principal cities across the country.

Dealers and decorators are invited to use the facilities of the showroom nearest them, for themselves and for their customers.

The consumer is welcome when accompanied by, or upon written request of a furniture dealer or decorator.

John Widdicomb furniture may be purchased only at fine stores and through accredited decorators.

Every piece made in the John Widdicomb shops bears the nameplate of the John Widdicomb Co.
Those made in the Berkey shops bear the Wm. A. Berkey nameplate.

John Widdicomb co.

for more than a century one of America's great furniture makers

GRAND RAPIDS
EXHIBITORS BLDG.

NEW YORK
ONE PARK AVE.

PHILADELPHIA
2301 CHESTNUT ST.

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John Widdicomb Furniture

More than 400 models are currently being produced by the John Widdicomb Co. and its subsidiary the Wm. A. Berkey Co. From these 400 models, the 175 shown in this booklet have been selected to give you some idea of how John Widdicomb furniture looks.

John Widdicomb furniture is designed to avoid at one extreme, slavish imitation of traditional styles and, at the other extreme, novelty or eye-appeal for its own sake. Frequently we start with a treasured classic, transforming it into a new masterpiece by a change in scaling; or by the removal of extraneous ornament; or by the addition of hardware of new and original design. This may involve a dozen nuances of judgement that pass unnoticed by the unpracticed eye. Furniture that embodies entirely new design concepts, new finishes, new materials and new proportions, demands of the designer a scholarly understanding of the great historic periods and a creative sensitivity to our contemporary culture, if it is to be furniture of enduring merit.

Fashions come and go. The passing fashion of the day will do well enough for things easily changed — clothes, bedspreads, lamps — but not for furniture. We believe that the trade and the informed public relies on John Widdicomb not to pander to "here today, gone tomorrow" fashions in furniture. John Widdicomb is committed to producing only such furniture as it believes will measure up to the time-tested criteria of artistic excellence. Of course, to assure lasting satisfaction, furniture must be well made, but today you can take it for granted that the construction of any good furniture will stand up under ordinary use. You expect to be able to open a heavily laden drawer with your finger tips. You expect to find perfection in the machining and other essentials of functioning. But beyond these essentials, is the over-arching importance of artistry in the design itself, and faithful execution of it with understanding and precision.

For a design to have permanent value, it must be timely, but also timeless. It must be appropriate to your way of life. It must have reserves of beauty that will keep pace with your growing good taste. Its beauty must impress itself upon you today and also tomorrow. The question to be answered is, — Is this furniture that will last a lifetime in my affections? Is it what the poet Keats had in mind when he said:

*"A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness."*

I have been told by proud possessors of John Widdicomb furniture that "John Widdicomb furniture is never out of date." "The longer we have it, the more we love it."

I hope that the pictures in this booklet will appeal to you as representing that kind of furniture. For many years dealers and decorators have recognized it as such and have come to John Widdicomb for it. And we at John Widdicomb have for many years felt a responsibility of leadership in the production of such furniture.

John Stuart
President

John Widdicomb Co.



The understated elegance of Italian Provincial by John Widdicomb is beautifully attuned to our present day living. This stately bureau with 9 commodious drawers is of highly figured French Walnut enhanced by Carpathian elm burls and heavy brass handles. Gilded accents on the hand carvings of the bed are repeated on the bureau mirror frame. The French chair provides a beau geste to the group.



4 Mid-Century Modern (MCM) is a new design approach introduced by John Widdicomb in 1949. Production of this furniture is limited and, of necessity, always will be. The 7 ft. bed illustrated is one of five beds of different design, each suitable for grouping with this bureau.





A 9 drawer bureau of utter simplicity planned to go with any one of a dozen John Widdicomb beds. Drawer fronts are sawn out of solid fruitwood 4" thick, unornamented except for the heavy chiseled brass handles.



No ESP (Extra Sensory Perception) is needed to recognize the regal qualities this John Widdicomb bedstead so elegantly declares.



A chest of drawers with an artful arrangement of space for a gentleman's shirts and stuff, promises many years of pleasurable use to any man. A bed, bedside table and open arm modified wing chair complement the chest and the important bureau shown page 9.



Enchanting, lovely French Provincial bureau and bedside table, executed with exacting fidelity to its inspired source, shown with a glimpse of the "lord and lady" bed.



To see a room furnished with this Mid-Century Modern chest, bed and chair, with a hint of the Orient in it, has been spoken of as "an esthetic experience in furniture."



A simple French Provincial group that speaks with the dignity of undisputed good taste. The fruitwood bureau with 9 commodious drawers generous enough for two person use. This model is very much as a French cabinetmaker might have made it in one of the lesser northern provinces of France about the year 1790. Hence its straightforward design appeals to people desiring not too much formality in an American home of the 1960s.



14 The design of this bed was inspired by the famous John Widdicomb Florentine chair. It is one of five beds in the Italian and French Provincial manner.



This important John Widdicomb bureau is cut from solid fruitwood 4" in thickness. The imposing, flamboyant handles are especially designed and cast from solid brass. When specified with marble top instead of the conventional wood top, this bureau becomes an item of real magnificence.





The Di-Functional Chest. So called because the interior is fitted with tray arrangements that make it suitable for bedroom or living room use.

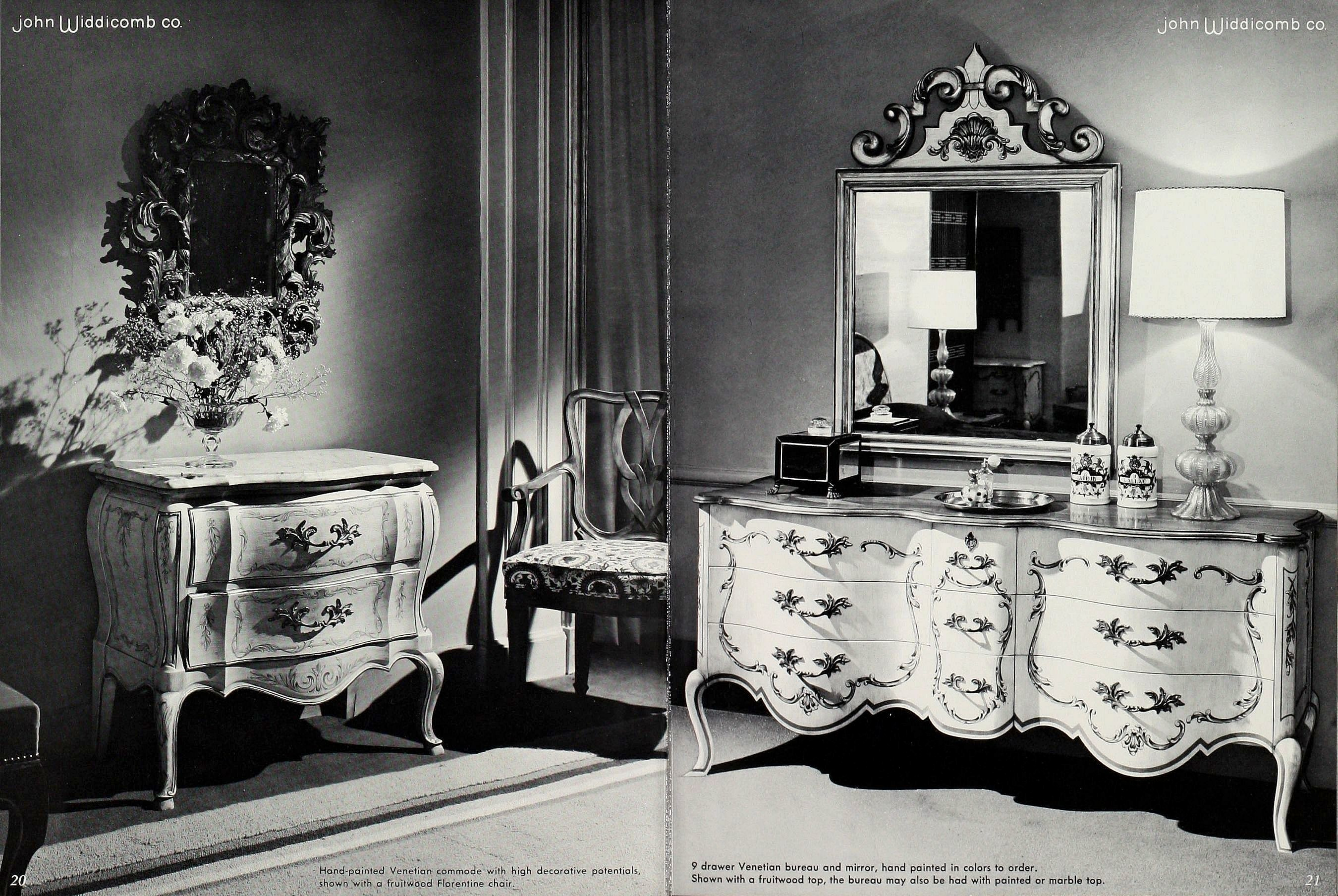


A painted powder table and chair that lose none of their charm when ordered in the regular fruitwood finish.



Sinuous curves, rising and falling, communicate an exuberance to this Venetian bed that is truly exhilarating. Coexistence with French or Italian Provincial furniture in the same room is no problem at all for this John Widdicomb bed.

In the background is shown a Florentine cabinet with raised gesso decorations, available in wood finish or painted in any color to order.



Hand-painted Venetian commode with high decorative potentials, shown with a fruitwood Florentine chair.

9 drawer Venetian bureau and mirror, hand painted in colors to order. Shown with a fruitwood top, the bureau may also be had with painted or marble top.



John Widdicomb Mid-Century Modern has never a trace of that frigid clinical look that too often characterizes modern furniture. Two alternate tables and three alternate chairs besides those shown here, are available for this group. The buffet comes in two lengths, and with or without the upper cabinet.



From the MCM Group. A skillful combination of materials — the caned panels of the bed, the brass frame of the mirror, the vertical line of brass drawer pulls which are inset with rosewood in contrast to the French Walnut of the 6 drawer bureau — all contribute greatly to the felicity of this John Widdicomb design.



It requires no stretch of the imagination to realize how readily any of the pieces shown here can be grouped with those shown on following pages to create a room of rare distinction and individuality.



A painted group with a broad oval table with top in cherry. Available also in all cherry. The breakfront with lighted interior can make a dramatic accent piece for a living room. The base without the upper cabinet becomes a fine buffet.



Country style dining acquires overtones of great sophistication in this Provincial grouping. Note the 'lord of the manor' dignity of the host chair, the graceful power in the lines of the table.



The monumental character of this John Widdicomb breakfront seems just right to add importance to the chunky little chair and small oval table with painted rim and legs.



On this page a Florentine cabinet of architectural proportions. On the opposite page an Italian Provincial breakfront, each shown with table and chairs of exceptional grandeur.



The Incredible Di-Functional Table

TRADEMARK REGISTERED



21" x 39" closed with leaves down
39" x 39" closed with leaves up
92" x 39" fully extended

The Incredible Di-Functional Table

TRADEMARK REGISTERED

in French Provincial



Table only 22" wide, extends to seat 10 comfortably.
The small scale Provincial chair is small but sturdy.

Another version of the ingenious
Di-Functional Table
TRADE MARK REGISTERED
 Shown here as a console. Extended it
 becomes a bridge table or a dining table.



Empire console with marble top shown with Italian side and arm chair.



36 An aristocratic Italian Provincial group that transmits a distinct feeling of serenity.



John Widdicomb Mid-Century Modern. Any of these pieces can be used interchangeably with any of those in the Italian group opposite.



The extraordinary affection of some people for their John Widdicomb furniture is a matter of great pride, to the workman at the bench as well as to the top management of the company. This is a constant source of encouragement to us to maintain the standards of quality and design that have gained us the high esteem in which John Widdicomb furniture has been held for four generations. This sophisticated grouping demonstrates how well chosen designs of different periods naturally harmonize.

The French Provincial sofa is flanked by a pair of Palladian cabinets. The little pedestal tables are Empire adaptations. One chair is of Louis XV and another of Louis XVI inspiration. The third chair is modern, the lamp table 18th Century French. Now turn the page please and consider how well this furniture could be placed with an 18th Century English breakfront, a Florentine armchair and a French console with a Persian mirror.



An English breakfront of Honduras mahogany. A French Provincial sofa and a fruitwood Florentine chair with morocco leather seat.



French Provincial console with tambour doors and Florentine marble top. Above it a hand painted reproduction of a Persian wedding mirror.



An Italian Provincial group of upholstered furniture with painted coffee table touched with gold, and marble inset top.



Of exquisite design in a most restrained manner, this John Widdicomb bed is conceived as an alternate for the conventional matching bed in any grouping — French, Italian or Modern. The design is distinctively individual yet, like a gracious lady, it is at home in any good company. The bedside table, and the pieces on the opposite page are from Mid-Century Modern.





Another version of the John Widdicomb

The Incredible Di-Functional Table

TRADEMARK REGISTERED

23" x 39" closed with leaves down

39" x 39" closed with leaves up

93" x 39" fully extended

Here it is shown serving as a game table with a pair of cane back pull-up chairs — all from Mid-Century Modern.

Observe the broad-gauged approach to these designs. John Widdicomb MCM never poses any problem of suitability with other good design. In fact just the opposite is true. In any setting, MCM pieces seem to raise the level of interest and relieve the tedium of too much sameness often found in design of classical origin. Picture this table and chairs in the setting shown on the opposite page and see if you don't agree.









Fruitwood chair shown with circular lamp table



A spacious French chair that suggests the promise of lavish ease. A tall, narrow cabinet just right to adorn an empty corner with a display of precious bibelots.



Classic open arm pull-up chair with caned back, in paint or in fruitwood. Beside it a narrow two tier table.



An 18th Century vitrine, glass on 3 sides, 2 adjustable glass shelves and interior lighting. Set on a 3 drawer cabinet for flat silver and doilies.



Shallow fruitwood commode only 10" deep with inset marble top, decorated mirror and cane back chair. For living room or narrow entrance hall.

A latter-day classic, the Lazy Susan turntable has been transformed into a John Widdicomb Mid-Century Modern snack table.



Bachelor's chest of English yew with pull-out serving tray. Used singly or in pairs for living room, dining room or bedroom.





Above, a lamp table and commode in French Walnut

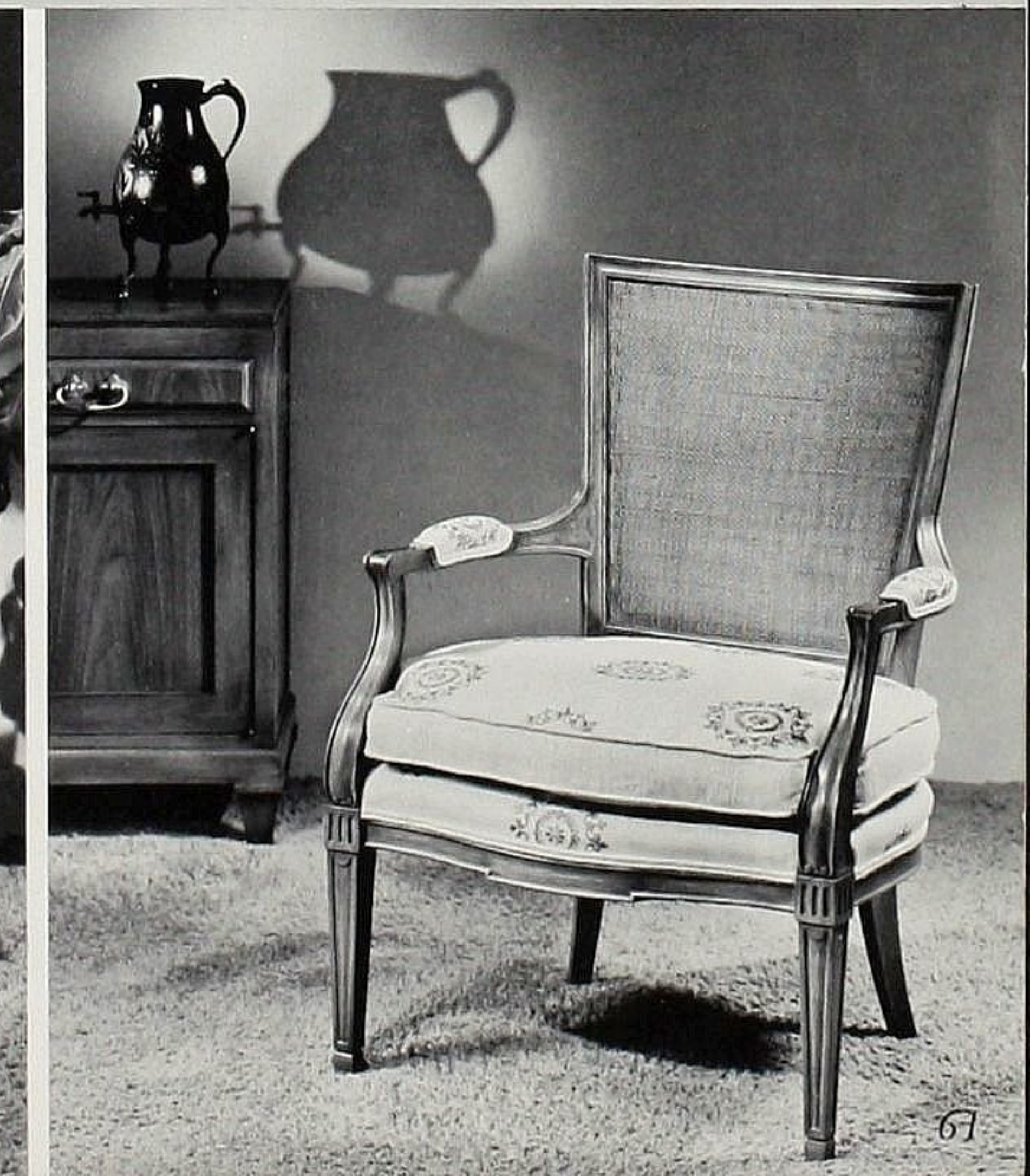
Above, French Provincial tea wagon

Above, Florentine commode

Below, a love seat that has endeared itself to many a lover of fine things

Below, Empire commode

Below, 18th Century fruitwood chair

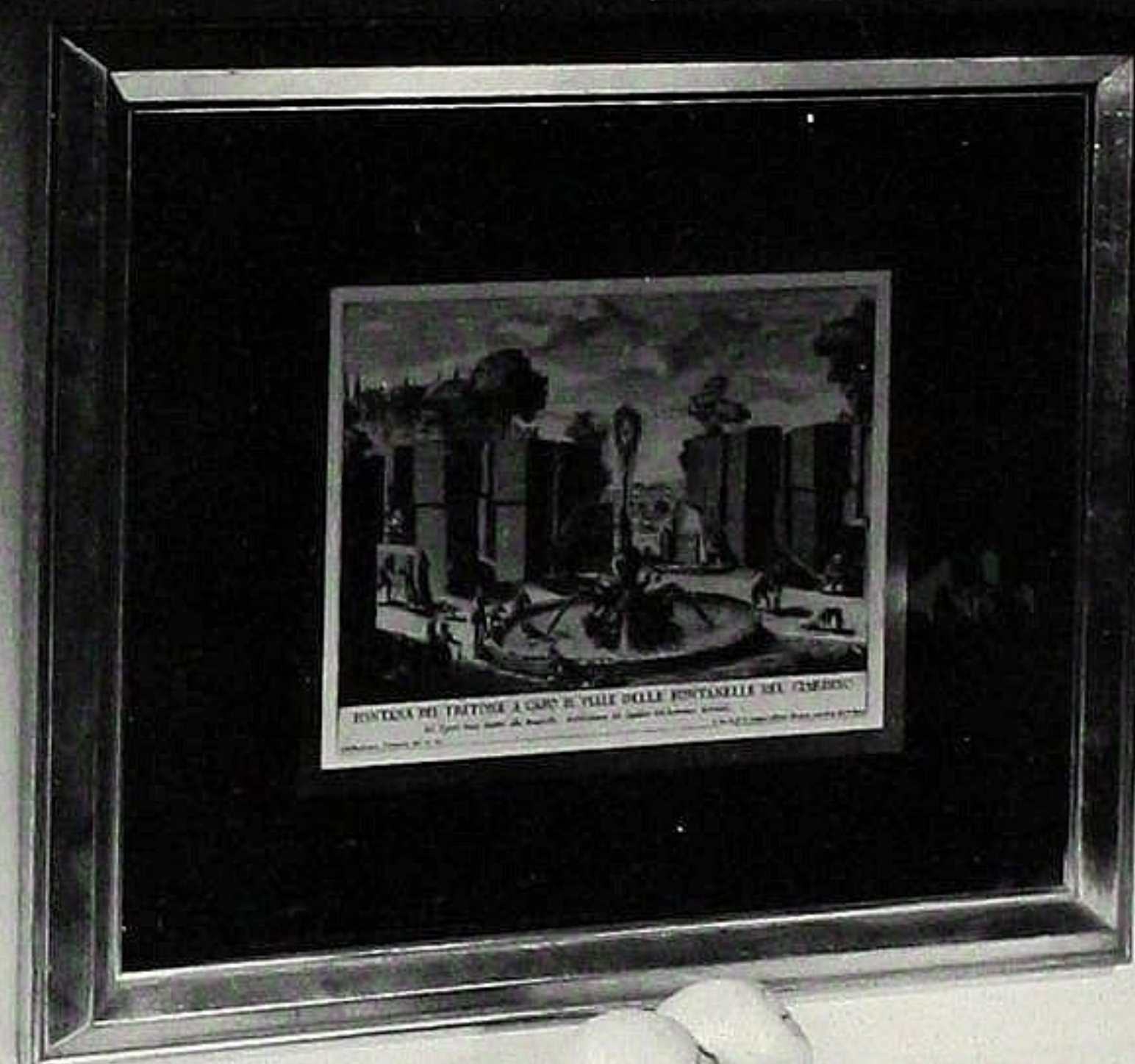




Improvisation on an Italian Provincial table. Concealed under the shelf is a pull-out tray with stain-proof top and folding legs that snap into place, producing a handy extra snack table.



Lady's writing desk and chair in paint and French Walnut



French Provincial console only 11" deep, hugs the wall in a narrow passageway

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